

# Meeting of the Working Group on the Pacific Human Resources for Health Alliance, *Nadi Fiji*

Second meeting of the WG on Pacific Human Resource for Health Alliance (PHRHA) was held in Nadi, Fiji, on 30 June – 2 July 2008. The Working Group was represented by high ranking officials from 12 Pacific Island Countries with observers from development partners and international organisations.

The aim of this Working Group meeting was to review and finalise the terms of reference of the PHRHA that will be proposed to the Pacific Health Ministers for endorsement. The Working Group also reviewed the 2008-2009 workplan of the alliance. The PHRHA will have a close

linkage with the AAAH. At present, three AAAH members are Pacific Island Countries. The following main areas of activities in the PHRHA workplan are similar to AAAH activities:

1. Advocacy and facilitate effective partnership
2. Alliance will serve as the HRH hub for the PIC (including monitoring HRH trends, and strengthening HRH data and information systems)
3. Support knowledge generation, management and sharing
4. Facilitate HRH capacity building, quality of training institution and networking



5. Support HRH policy and strategy development, leadership and management of PIC

Collaboration and sharing experience between two alliances will enhance the development of Human resources for health in the Pacific.

## G8 Countries To Discuss Health Worker Shortages, Set Targets During July Summit

The Group of Eight industrialized nations plans to discuss setting numerical targets to address the global shortage of health workers, particularly in Africa and Asia, during its July summit in Japan, the Kyodo News reports. According to sources close to the negotiations, G8 members are considering including in a set of guidelines the World Health Organization goal of having at least 4.1 health service providers and support workers per 1,000 people by 2015. Of the 4.1 providers, 2.3 would be health workers such as physicians, nurses and midwives, according to Kyodo News.

Although the G8 does not plan to make new commitments to address health worker shortages, it likely will mention the WHO figures as a target for strengthening its financial and other support to train and retain health workers, the sources said. They added that a draft of the plan stresses the urgency for international cooperation, while also calling for a better method to deliver aid because this year marks the midpoint of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. The draft also em-

phasizes the need for a multisectoral approach to lessen health worker shortages -- a target included in the MDGs along with other development goals, such as curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. Representatives from G8 countries also are discussing implementing a "follow-up mechanism," such as having an annual report to ensure accountability. However, the lack of comprehensive plans to secure basic infrastructures; train physicians, nurses and other health workers; and provide funds to retain a skilled work force through better salaries remain issues in efforts to reduce the shortage.

According to the Kyodo News, 57 countries, mostly in Africa and Asia, face severe health work force crises. Although sub-Saharan Africa has 11% of the world's population and 24% of the global burden of disease, it has 3% of the world's health workers. WHO estimates that filling the shortage in Africa would require training 1.5 million additional health workers, which would cost at least \$7 billion annually. Source:Tang, Kyodo News, 6/22